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The scientific dissemination of phosphoethanolamine in Brazilian newspapers

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Introduction

- Over 7 million people die of cancer around the world every year
- Substance synthetic phosphoethanolamine was given freely to cancer patients, without clinical support – allegedly, it could cure any cancer
- Responsible: a professor at a university (it won't be named) – he retired and people stopped receiving the capsules

Methods

- Case study
- Bibliographic research
- Documental research
- Mediatic speech

Design

- Communication as a polysemic concept
- **Public communication** – can be scientific, political and governmental or of the State; or even organizational and organized civil society – its objective is the wide public
- **Political communication** – relationship between the political system and the media system and voters
- **Governmental communication** – responsibility of the State and the Government to establish an informative and communicative flow with its citizens

The case

- October 2015: with the professor's retirement, people stopped receiving the phosphoethanolamine capsules
- They started to sue the university
- Supreme Court suspended injunctions and changed its mind some days later
- March 2016: National Congress and Federal Senate approved the regulamentation of phosphoethanolamine use

The case (cont.)

- April 2016: president Dilma Rousseff authorizes the law about the phosphoethanolamine use
- May 2016: Federal Court of Justice suspended the law
- During this period, all the technical opinions, from responsible agencies, were against the phosphoethanolamine use
- In São Paulo, clinical research kept going for 12 months and concluded it was inefficient

Participants

- Newspapers from the biggest city in Brazil: São Paulo
 - O Estado de São Paulo
 - Folha de S. Paulo
- Institutional newspaper from the university
- Period: October 2015-April 2017
- Online archives

Results

- **Institutional newspaper:** failed as a support to scientific dissemination
- **O Estado de São Paulo:**
 - Before release of substance: did an impartial media coverage, without going deeper
 - After release of substance published several full-paper articles, with more depth
- **Folha de S. Paulo:**
 - Before release of substance: the subject was a huge issue, amongst its columnists and readers
 - After release of substance: moderate content

Conclusions

- There were previous researchs concluding phosphoethanolamine didn't have the alleged efficiency
- The university suffered institutional damage, being accused of denying the cure of cancer to the people
- The media didn't fullfil its paper as respectable informants
- The ellected politicians, the people's representatives, didn't listen to responsible agencies

Thank you for your time!
I hope this research was useful to you.
To read more, you can check my page:

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